

Build Consensus

The goal of consensus building is to get individuals who hold different views on an issue to share information and negotiate to arrive at a mutually acceptable course of action. Consensus is not always possible in every situation but is a desirable goal, particularly in communities. A majority vote does not represent a consensus.

Begin building consensus by asking each individual for their opinion. For consensus to work, each should be willing to accept less than everything they want in order to help the association toward its goal.

Keep in mind the following tips to help your community reach consensus:

- ***Rank problems and/or solutions.***
- ***Brainstorm*** to help generate ideas in a short period of time.
- ***Encourage interaction*** in meetings, which may result in a consensus.
- ***Use negotiation techniques.***
- ***Create a focus group.*** Members of this group will help describe the problem or define others' perception.

The National Parks Service has an excellent resource for consensus building available on their website. You can find some of the following information and other useful tools at:

www.nps.gov/phso/rtcatoobox/index_comtoolbox.htm.